

HEAVENLY RECOGNITION.

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A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT PORT HILLS, VT., OCTOBER 3, 1864,

AT THE FUNERAL OF

Mrs. Lucy H. Niles,

WIFE OF

H. H. NILES, M. D.,

WHO DIED SEPT. 30, 1864.

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By REV. SILAS McFARLEN, D. D.,  
Pastor of the Congregational Church, in Bradford, Vt.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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DELIVERED AT POST MILLS, VERMONT,

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AT THE FUNERAL OF

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By REV. SILAS McKEEN, D.D.,  
Pastor of the Congregational Church, in Bradford, Vt.

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W. W. Curtis, Printer, Bradford, Vt

REV. SILAS McKEEN,—

*Dear Sir:* In compliance with the request of several of our friends, and agreeably to my own wishes, I respectfully ask you for a Copy of the Sermon, delivered at the Funeral of Mrs. NILES, for the Press.

Respectfully yours,

H. H. NILES.

Post Mills, Oct. 22, 1864.

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REPLY.

DR. H. H. NILES,—

*My Dear Friend:* I will not refuse what you ask; for I know by deep experience that the theme of the Discourse, to which you refer, is truly consolatory to one situated as you are. The subject is more fully treated by Rev. H. Harbaugh, on "Heavenly Recognition," and by Rev. Dr. A. C. Thompson, in his Book entitled the "Heavenly Land"; to both of whom I acknowledge a measure of indebtedness.

My kindest regards to yourself and family,

S. McKEEN.

Bradford, Vt., Oct. 26, 1864.

# SERMON.

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## Heavenly Recognition.

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And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven....Mathew viii: 11.

This remarkable declaration our Saviour made to his disciples, at the time when the Roman Centurion, in the exercise of strong faith, came to Him desiring that He would heal his servant, then lying at home sick of the palsy, and grievously tormented. To this distinguished, yet humble petitioner, Jesus said: "Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed from that self same hour.

This passage, by the distinct mention of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as individuals well known in heaven, strongly favors the belief, that the saints in light will as perfectly recognize each other, as they did on earth; and enjoy each others society, as that of well known and dearly loved friends. In perfect fellowship with each other, and with Christ, as Lord of all, a great part of heavenly felicity will, undoubtedly, be found.

By the doctrine of Heavenly Recognition, I understand, not only that the heirs of salvation who have known each other here, will know each other in heaven; but also that they may likewise know, either directly or by information, all the saints of whom they have ever heard or read, and become personally and intimately acquainted with the inhabitants of that blessed kingdom, to an ~~indefinable~~ <sup>infinite</sup> extent. The contemplation of this theme, on such an occasion as the present, when we are about to lay the remains of a beloved Christian friend in the grave, and are so solemnly reminded that we are all passing away, seems

peculiarly appropriate, and suited to minister consolation to all who are hoping for heaven.

The doctrine which we are about to consider, though not free from that cloud of mysteriousness which rests on all our prospects beyond the present life, may, and as it seems to me, should be received with humble confidence, on such grounds as these, namely, its harmlessness, its reasonableness, its agreement with the common belief of mankind, the support which is given to it by the Holy Scriptures, and the beneficial influence which it is suited to have on the minds and hearts of those who entertain it. If no one of these sources of evidence, separately considered, should be thought to furnish positive proof, if all taken together should be regarded as falling short of demonstration, yet, if I do not misjudge the result with most candid persons, will be a prevailing belief in its truthfulness. Let us look at these several topics in their order.

1. A belief in the doctrine of Heavenly Recognition can do no harm.

Various theological questions, having respect to the unseen world, are of such a nature that a belief of the side contrary to truth is not only erroneous, but may prove eminently injurious to him who entertains it. Is the soul of man destined to an endless existence? Allowing it to be so, a belief that it is not, may induce him who holds it to pursue a course of conduct utterly unworthy of an immortal being. Will there be a day of final judgment, when we must all appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of the deeds done in the body, and receive a sentence of approval or condemnation never to be revoked? Will all who have lived and died in obedience to the Gospel be thenceforth eternally blessed, and all who have lived and died in sin then go away into everlasting punishment? These are questions on whose decision by individuals their eternal life or death may depend. And the danger lies all on one side. If there were no future state of retribution, a belief that there is such a state must have a beneficial influence on the minds and conduct of men in the



present life. But if there is such a state, a contrary belief, may, and almost inevitably must, end in utter perdition.

Not so in regard to the question under consideration. If you believe in a future state of retribution, and the necessity of obedience to the gospel in order to gain admission to the kingdom of heaven, you can be in no dangerous error whether you do, or do not, believe that the heirs of salvation who know each other here, will recognize each other in heaven, since all there will be entirely satisfied, and perfectly happy. A belief in heavenly recognition, whether well sustained or not, can have no bad influence on the hearts and lives of those who entertain it, but, constituted as we all are, must be to us, amid the sore bereavements and manifold trials of life, a delightful anticipation. It brings heaven near, and invests it with increased attractions. We might, then, safely, and with benefit, entertain this belief, even on slight evidence; but I trust a due consideration of the subject will furnish us with such grounds of confidence, that we shall feel no painful sense of doubt, with regard to the matter. In this as in many other cases, it is fit that we should believe and act in accordance with the preponderating weight of evidence.

## 2. The doctrine of Heavenly Recognition is entirely reasonable.

Taking it for granted that those who here have lived and walked with God, who have passed through the various sufferings and enjoyments of this life together, who have with united desires and efforts prayed and labored to work out their own salvation, and to promote that of their fellow men, are hereafter to exist, with increased capacities, in the kingdom of God, where each will have a recollection of all the scenes through which he has passed, and of all the persons with whom he was ever acquainted, is it not eminently reasonable to suppose that they will know each other and rejoice in each other's society? When Christian friends, after long separation, meet on earth, their feelings of piety, no less than those of sympathy and loving kindness, incline them to converse freely with each other respecting the various pursuits in which they have been engaged, the prosperity or adversity which has attended

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them, the bereavements and sorrows which they have experienced, and the goodness of God to them under all. In such free conversation and fellowship a great part of our happiness, even as Christians, is found. The Saviour himself has made it a chief evidence of our discipleship that we have love one to another.

What then can be more unreasonable than to suppose that when these intimate friends jointly enter the celestial city, and take possession of their heavenly inheritance, they will have nothing further to say to each other respecting their earthly pilgrimage ; or the wonderful wisdom and benevolence of God exhibited in their deliverance from the thralldom of sin, from the snares of Satan, and in training them by a long course of discipline for immortal glory and blessedness ? How unreasonable, especially, to imagine that they will not know even that they were acquainted, or ever felt any particular interest in each other, while on earth ! There can be no rational doubt but that the spirits of the just made perfect will find great satisfaction in each other's society ; conversing together respecting the various scenes through which they have passed, and the wonder working power of God, manifested in preparing them for heaven.

We know not *how* they will recognize each other, or hold inter communication, especially during the period between death and the resurrection of the body ; but that constitutes no valid objection to the supposed fact that they do thus communicate with each other. Persons here, make themselves known and communicate their thoughts and desires by means which would be deemed marvellous and incredible, were they not so familiar as to attract little or no attention. A look, a motion of the hand or head, certain impulses given to the air by the organs of speech, certain marks or impressions on paper, made by the pen, or the printer's types ; electric fluid darted along the telegraphic wires, extending over continents or through ocean depths, are all so many means by which the thoughts and wishes of one soul are conveyed to another. And if such means are common here, who can doubt but the same intelligent beings, in a higher state of existence, whether in the body or



out of it, will be able, by some means, to converse freely with each other? The various capacities and powers of the human soul adapt us for society, and we are warranted to expect that such society will be enjoyed in heaven, in a far higher and more perfect degree, than it ever was, or can be enjoyed on earth.

3. The doctrine of Heavenly Recognition is in agreement with the general belief of mankind.

A belief in a future state of existence is so congenial to the nature and wants of the human soul, that it has prevailed among all nations; and has been universally attended by the fond expectations that the good, who have lived in love and friendship here, would there be more intimately united, and that without any liability to separation. The views of the Pagan nations have, of course, been dark, conflicting, and in many respects erroneous; but their perfect agreement in the main fact, shows that it is a want of human nature, and by common consent a thing to be expected. Why has it been customary for widows in the East to sacrifice themselves on the funeral piles of their deceased husbands; or for the people in the interior of Africa, on the death of a distinguished chieftain, to cut off, by violence, numbers of his young warriors, if it be not with the expectation that they would, in some way, be to the deceased, in the future world, very much what they had been in the present? The poor Indian, in our western wilds, consoles himself on the death of his friends by the hope that he shall meet them again, in the unknown regions beyond the mountains which skirt his horizon, and rejoice with them there, in the abundant provision made by the Great Spirit for all his wants. The embalming of the dead by the Egyptians, the practice of depositing weapons of war and precious ornaments in sepulchres; and of regularly for a time, setting articles of food by the graves of the deceased, common among benighted people, all have respect to an after life; and manifest an expectation that the departed will be very much the same there, as here; have similar wants, and derive their happiness from essentially the same sources.

The Philosophers, the Poets, the Orators, and other cultivated and

distinguished men of antiquity, especially among the Greeks and Romans, strongly expressed not only the popular belief respecting this subject, but their own in concurrence therewith. Had we time, many striking proofs might be presented from the writings of Homer, Socrates, Virgil, Cicero, and others, showing that they believed that departed spirits are familiarly conversant with each other.

And what have been the prevailing views of Christians, from the days of the Fathers down to the present time? All the ancient and pious fathers agreed in the belief. St. Cyprian was confident that "Our pious parents, brethren, children, and near relations who have departed this life, expect us in heaven, and are solicitous for our good." In the close of his sermon on immortality, speaking of heaven, he says, "Why should we not hasten and fly to seek our home, and greet our parents? A great host of beloved friends await us there; a numerous and various crowd, parents, brethren, and children who are secure in a blessed immortality, and only still concerned for us, are looking with desire for our arrival. To see and embrace these—what a mutual joy will this be to us and them! What bliss, without fear of death, to live eternally in the kingdom of heaven! How vast, and of eternal duration, is our celestial blessedness! There is the glorious choir of the apostles—there the joyful prophets—there the innumerable company of martyrs, crowned on account of their victory in the conflict of sufferings. There the merciful who have fed and blessed the poor, and according to their Lord's direction have exchanged earthly for heavenly treasures, now receive their glorious reward. To these dearly beloved brethren, let us hasten, with strong desire; and ardently wish soon to be with them; and with Christ." In such like passages did Jerome, and Augustine, and other celebrated divines of antiquity, express their full belief in the doctrine of future recognition among those who die in the Lord.

Passing rapidly down the course of time, let us briefly notice the current belief of the people of God respecting the same point. On the evening before Martin Luther died, he expressed his strong belief in

this doctrine. Melanethon, another of the Reformers, "a few days before his death, told Camerarius that he trusted that their friendship would be cultivated and perpetuated in another world." Thomas Becon, one of the English Reformers, says, "When we are once come into the heavenly Jerusalem, we shall, without doubt, both see and know all the holy and most blessed company of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with all others of the faithful. As we are all members of one body, whereof Christ is the head, so shall we know one another, and rejoice together." The Rev. Charles Drelingcourt, of Paris, concludes an argument on this subject, saying, "I am, therefore, more than fully persuaded that we shall know in heaven our parents, and friends, and generally all the persons whom we have known here below." Rev. Dr. Knapp, of Germany, says, "According to the representations contained in the holy scriptures, the saints will dwell together in the future world, and form, as it were, a kingdom, or state, of God. They will there partake of a common felicity. Their enjoyment will, doubtless, be very much heightened by friendship, and by their confiding intercourse with each other. That we shall there recognize our former friends, and shall again be associated with them, was uniformly believed by all antiquity." Dr. Doddridge when, bereaved by death of a beloved child, says, "Let me be thankful for the pleasing hope that though God loves my child too well to permit it to return to me, he will ere long bring me to it. And that endeared, paternal affection, which would have been a cord to tie me to earth, and have added new pangs to my removal from it, will be a golden chain to draw me upward; and add one further charm and joy even to Paradise itself. It is for no language but that of heaven to describe the sacred joy which such a meeting must occasion."

The general belief of the Christian ministry and people of these United States, is well expressed, if I do not misjudge in the following passage from the writings of Rev. Dr. Edwards. "It is reasonable to believe that the saints shall know that they had such and such a rela-

tion to one another, when they were on earth. The father shall know that such a one was his child ; the husband shall know that such a one was his wife ; the spiritual guide shall know that such belonged to his flock ; and so all other relations of persons shall be renewed and known in heaven. The ground of which assertion is this, that the soul of man is of that nature that it depends not on the body and sense ; and therefore being separated, knows all that it knew in the body. The delights of conversation are continued in heaven. Friends and relations are free with one another ; and call to mind their former circumstances and conditions in the world, so far as may be serviceable to advance their happiness."

Rev. Dr. Emmons, another eminent American theologian, said, in his old age, " I want to go to heaven. It is an inexpressibly glorious place. The more I think of it, the more delightful it appears. I want to see who is there ; I want to see brother Sanford, and brother Niles, and brother Spring, and Dr. Hopkins, and Dr. West, and a great many other ministers, with whom I have been associated in this world, but who have gone before me. I believe I shall meet them in heaven ; and, it seems to me that our meeting there must be peculiarly interesting." He added, " I want to see, too, the old prophets, and the apostles. What a society there will be in heaven ! There we shall see such men as Moses, and Isaiah, and Elijah, and David, and Paul. I want to see Paul more than any man I can think of."

Such has been and still is the common belief of men distinguished for their knowledge and piety, who, under the full light of the Gospel, have spent the time of their sojourning here with heaven continually in view. And their united voices of hope and joyful confidence may well have a powerful influence on our own minds. But their reasonings, and strongly expressed hopes, are not, and should not be, the main ground of our belief ; since we are favored with the light of divine revelation. I, therefore, remark,

4. That the doctrine of Heavenly Recognition derives strong support from the holy scriptures.



It is not represented that they teach this sentiment as directly and fully as they do the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead and a judgment to come; still there is so much said, and manifestly taken for granted, there are so many incidental allusions to the subject, that whoever will collect these rays of light together, and suffer them to shine without observation, surely will not be obliged to walk in darkness.

The fact that kindred saints, in the days of the patriarchs strongly desired that their remains should be buried together, implies their hopes of a reunion beyond the present life. Abraham, when his wife Sarah died, purchased of Ephron the Hittite the cave of Machpelah, with the adjoining field adorned with trees, as a burial place not only for his deceased wife, but for himself and posterity. He insisted on paying a liberal price and making his title sure. When this venerable father of the faithful died, his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, laid his remains in the same cave, to rest till the morning of the final resurrection. There, too, they buried Isaac, and Rebecca his wife; and Jacob buried Leah. Jacob, when about to die in the land of Egypt, charged his sons to convey his lifeless body to his native land, and lay it in the cave of Machpelah, with his kindred dead. This command they faithfully obeyed. Joseph, as the time of his departure drew near, instead of wishing his body to be laid in state with those of the illustrious dead in the catacombs or pyramids of Egypt, "took an oath of the children of Israel, saying God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." He wished his remains to rest in the burying place of his fathers. But if these men of God had not believed in future existence, had not believed in recognition, and re-union, among the sainted dead, what possible inducement could they have had to wish so strongly to be buried together?

Again, the peculiar terms in which the death of the good is recorded in the scriptures, are very significant. "Abraham gave up the ghost, and died—and *was gathered to his people.*" "Isaac gave up the ghost

and died, and was gathered unto his people." The same phraseology is used in regard to Jacob. The phrase "gave up the ghost," is thought, by some, to be simply equivalent to the term *expired*; but as it is the fit term to express resigning up the Spirit, the soul, no reason appears why it should not in these instances be so understood, especially when it is also said that the individual who thus gave up the ghost, *died*. The martyr Stephen, no doubt, expressed the true meaning of the ancient phraseology when he said, "Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit;" that is, his immortal soul. It must have been with special reference to the souls, or spirits of those ancient believers that it is said, they were gathered to their people. The true God was their God, and his people were their people. With what propriety could the phrase be used of the body? of the body before its burial, and especially when it never was buried with its kindred dead? Jacob was gathered to his people as soon as he died, though a long and tedious pilgrimage was to be performed by his sons, before his remains could be deposited in the cave of Machpelah. Aaron died on the top of Mount Hor, in the solitary desert; but he was, nevertheless, gathered to his people. Moses died on Mount Nebo, and was buried somewhere in the land of Moab; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day; yet he was gathered unto his people. He was gathered unto the great assembly of the pious who had entered the heavenly world before him; to be forever united with them there, in the love, worship and enjoyment of God.

When David's child died, he remarked, with deep emotion, "I shall go to him; but he will not return to me." He evidently expected to meet that child in the future world; to know it as his; and that they should be happy together, as father and child, where sickness and death and sorrow will no more be experienced.

The prophet Daniel's prediction of the great event, when "the many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise, some to glory and honor, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," implies that individuals



will be personally known in their true characters ; for how, otherwise, should some be honored and others dishonored, according to their respective deserts ?

At the transfiguration of our Saviour, when his countenance shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, Moses, who had died on Mount Nebo many ages before, and Elijah who had been taken up into heaven without dying, appeared and conversed with him respecting the decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. This was the identical Moses who had given the law to Israel amid the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai—the identical Elijah who had so gloriously vindicated the honor of the true God before an evil and apostate generation. And as they retained their distinctive, characters, and names, why may it not be so with all the saints in light, even during their intermediate state ? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

When our Saviour came to the grave of Lazarus, after he had been four days numbered with the dead, and decomposition in the lifeless body had commenced, as he stood by that open grave, he cried with a loud voice, “ Lazarus, come forth ! ” The individual who was thus called back to life was, even in the world of spirits, still Lazarus ; the brother of Mary and Martha ; the friend of Jesus ; and when called by name, called by him who is Lord alike of the living and the dead, he enters at once into his reanimated body, and springs forth exulting in life.

Our Saviour’s account of the general judgment, when every one must give account of himself, in the presence of the assembled universe, implies that every individual must be more fully known by others, even by his most intimate acquaintances, than he ever was, or could be, in this present life.

In our Lord’s valedictory to his disciples, he said, “ In my Father’s house are many mansions—I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” This was addressed to them

individually ; to Peter, James, John, and all the rest. Christ would receive each and all of them to himself, where, in his presence, they should enjoy intimate communion with him and with each other, forever.

Heavenly enjoyment is sometimes symbolized by a feast, at which all the saints in light are social, and welcome guests.

To the penitent thief on the cross, who cried, " Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom ;" Jesus replied, " This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The promise is personal. That very penitent, that identical sinner, snatched from the jaws of destruction, was the individual who should be thus highly exalted. And the whole truth respecting him must be known in order that the wonderful power and grace of God in his conversion might be duly appreciated. So will it be with all other sincere believers.

St. Paul's address to his ~~convicts~~<sup>converts</sup> at Thessalonica, strongly implies his belief in this doctrine. " For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ? For ye are our glory and joy." Nothing is more evident than that he expected to know these converts in the heavenly world, in distinction from all others ; and to rejoice over them with exceeding joy.

In John's apocalyptic vision of the order and worship of the heavenly inhabitants, the various nations, languages, and tribes, from which they have been gathered, are known, their sufferings for righteousness sake, are remembered ; they are personally addressed and rewarded ; they are all clothed in white robes, have crowns set on their heads, and unite in songs of lofty praise, which roll and reverberate through the celestial world.

Surely all these representations, and others which might be deduced from the divine oracles, strongly sustain the belief that the saints in glory know each other, more intimately than they ever did on earth ; and will forever be most firmly united in love and exalted friendship.

Finally, The doctrine of heavenly recognition derives support from

the fact that its belief must have a beneficial influence on those who receive it. It bears the stamp of a true doctrine in this, that it is in accordance with godliness, and profitable for instruction in righteousness.

It tends to elevate and strengthen our earthly affections. Said the Rev. Richard Baxter, "I must confess, as the experience of my own soul, that the expectation of loving my friends in heaven, principally kindles my love to them on earth. If I thought I should never know them, and consequently never love them after this life is ended, I should in reason number them with temporal things and love them as such. But I now delight to converse with my pious friends, in a firm persuasion that I shall converse with them forever, and I take comfort in those of them that are dead or absent, as believing that I shall shortly meet with them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love, that shall be perfect."

In these views and feelings we may all concur. Your houses and lands, your clothing and furniture, your bonds and deeds, your offices and worldly honors, of what avail will they be to you, when forever removed from earth by the hand of death. You can take none of these things with you, nor would they be of any use if you could. But if you are heirs of salvation, your separation from your pious friends on earth will be of brief duration; they will soon meet you in the heavenly world, to be the joy of your hearts forever. This consideration should unite us strongly with them in the present life; and move us to treat even the humblest and most dependent of them, with great loving kindness, as joint-heirs with ourselves to an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, and which shall never fade away. Kindness to our suffering fellow Christians, on account of their union with the blessed Saviour, he will, in the last day, acknowledge as done to himself, and richly reward. And if any of our kindred or friends are not prepared to enter with us into the joy of our Lord, let the powers of the world to come constrain us to use the most faithful endeavors to persuade them to secure, while possible, an interest in the great salvation. O, how

happy, how supremely blessed, must those families be, who shall find themselves at last, without one missing, in the kingdom of heaven ! All forever at home !

Again, this doctrine is exceedingly comforting to those who have by the stroke of death been bereaved of pious friends. The thought that they are not lost, but only gone before us to the heavenly world, that freed from all sin and sorrow, and made perfect in righteousness, they have joined the general assembly and church of the first born, and are there rejoicing in the presence of the exalted Redeemer—the thought that in the morning of the resurrection their bodies, once laid in the grave to return to dust, shall be raised again to life, glorious and immortal, that their sanctified spirits and incorruptible bodies are henceforth to be re-united in indissoluble bonds, to be forever delightfully occupied in the service of God, and that we, if truly pious, shall see them and know them and be united with them in perfect love, and shine with them forever in the beauties of a glorious immortality, may well assuage our grief and fill our hearts with divine consolation.

This consolation the ancient believers richly enjoyed. With them faith was indeed the substance of things hoped for ; the evidence of things not seen. When multitudes were swept away, at Carthage, by a desolating pestilence, Cyprian, speaking of the pious who had died, said to his church, “ We ought not to mourn for those who are delivered from this world by the call of the Lord, since we know that they are not lost, but sent before us ; that they have taken their leave of us, in order to precede us. We may long after them, as we do for those who have sailed on a distant voyage, but not lament them. We may not here below put on dark robes of mourning, when they have already put on white robes of glory ; we may not give the heathen just occasion to accuse us of weeping for those <sup>as</sup> who are lost and extinct, of whom we say they live with God ; to accuse us of failing to prove by our hearts the faith we profess by our lips. We who live in hope, who believe in God, and trust that Christ has suffered for us, and risen again—why do we not ourselves

wish to depart out of this world? Or why do we weep for the friends who have been separated from us as if they were lost?" O that the same strong faith and hope may live and reign in our hearts, and amid the bereavements and sorrows of this dying world, fill us continually with peace and joy in believing.

This consolation the relatives and friends of the beloved Christian lady whose funeral we are now attending, are permitted to enjoy.\* A few facts communicated to me by those who had the best opportunity to know them, especially with regard to her pious resignation, peacefulness, and strong hope in the blessed Saviour in the near prospect of death, I will take the liberty to communicate. Mrs. Niles, as daughter, sister, wife, mother, friend, was a true and faithful woman. By those who really knew her, her loss will be severely felt, and her memory fondly cherished. She having in early life, consecrated herself to the adorable Saviour, thenceforth, aimed to live in accordance with her Christian profession; and when called to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, she feared no evil. To her sister Mary she said, one night, "How good it seems to be laid aside from the busy cares of life, that I may reflect on the goodness of God." She often spoke of the mercy and the goodness of God to her. At one time, in an audible and impressive manner, she offered a most fervent prayer, committing herself and those so near to her in life to the care and mercy of God; adding that if she was soon to be removed from earth she wished to

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\* Mrs. Lucy H. Niles was the eldest daughter of the late William Heaton, Esq., and Mrs. Martha Childs Heaton, of Post Mills, Vt. She was born in Thetford, Vt. March 29, 1809—was married to H. H. Niles, M. D., Jan. 4, 1831. Soon after her marriage she became hopefully pious, and with her husband united with the Congregational Church; in connection with which she continued during the rest of her life. She was the mother of three daughters, Elizabeth Kezer, Frances Maria, and Martha Kate, who, with their beloved father, have lived to experience this sore bereavement. After a severe and protracted sickness which she endured with sweet submission to the Divine will, Mrs. Niles passed away to her heavenly home, Sept. 30, 1864, in the 56th year of her age.



spend every remaining moment of her life to the glory of God. At another time she urged her daughters so to live that their whole lives might be one constant breath of prayer ! Death, she said, had no terrors for her, for Christ would be with her.

When her sister Martha came from her distant home in the West, and asked if she felt that God had been good to her in her sickness, she quickly replied, " Oh, yes ! so good, and so kind ! and now how thankful I ought to be that I have lived to see you. I have many things to say, but am too weak to say much now." But added, " I must tell you how kind every one has been to me. Oh, how can I be grateful enough for it ?" At another time when her sister asked her on what theme she dwelt with the greatest interest in the midst of her sufferings, " Oh," said she, " the goodness—the goodness and mercy of God." When her daughter Frankie, at one time inquired, with allusion to a piece of music which her mother admired, " Mother do you feel as if you were ' Only waiting ?'" " Yes," she replied, " only waiting—only waiting to be with Jesus." When asked by her sister why she wished to be with Jesus, she said, " That I may be like him." And thus did she depart, looking to Jesus, hoping to be in soul and body perfectly transformed into his likeness, and to rejoice, with all the sanctified, in his love and service forever. Truly the bereaved husband and daughters and all the loving relatives and friends, have reason to be comforted ; and to bless God, most heartily, for his great goodness to the dear one whom he has called away, and to themselves. May his grace be sufficient for you all. May you all be prepared to meet her in " the land of pure delights."

I remark, finally, that a belief in Heavenly Recognition is suited to awaken, in the hearts of the living, a desire to be prepared to unite with the redeemed and saved, in their exalted services and enjoyments. It gives a reality to the unseen world which must be impressive. You are not to conceive of heaven as of some far off mystical region, involved in thick clouds and deep obscurity, where all is without form and



void, whose shadowy inhabitants are destitute of all the feelings of personal attachment, alike unknowing and unknown, and where, should you enter, no one would give you a cordial greeting, or notice you. Banish forever such gloomy forebodings. Heaven is the very metropolis of the universe, the city of the living God, infinitely exceeding in sublimity and beauty everything in art or nature which we are accustomed to admire ; filled, it is, with the light of Jehovah's countenance, and with the exuberance of his everlasting love. There all the pious relatives and friends, over whose departure you once mourned so bitterly, are waiting to receive you into their unutterable blessedness. There all the excellent of the earth who have passed through the gate of death now live and rejoice. There the holy angels lift up their voice of praise to God over every sinner who repents and obeys the gospel. There the glorious Redeemer, surrounded by all the hosts of heaven, lives and reigns, and delights to render the innumerable multitude of his saints supremely blessed and happy.

Do you not then, my fellow travellers to eternity, desire, in God's good time, to be re-united with your pious relatives and friends, and to join with them, and with all the heavenly hosts, in their exalted services and everlasting enjoyments. Can you endure the thought of being forever excluded from the fellowship of all the good, from the presence of Christ who died and rose again that you might live—the thought of an everlasting abode with the wicked in the world of woe? Be entreated by all that is lovely and attractive in heaven, by all that is dreadful in sin and suffering that will never cease, by the love and authority of God, to come with contrite hearts, with believing spirits, to Jesus ; and consecrate yourselves, entirely and forever, to his service. Then, when he who is your life shall appear, ye also shall appear with him, and with all his saints in glory.

“There all the millions of his saints  
Shall in one song unite,  
And each the bliss of all shall view,  
With infinite delight.”





